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ScrumMaster Anti-Patterns
Where Does It Go Wrong?

APLN OC Meeting – 4/1/09

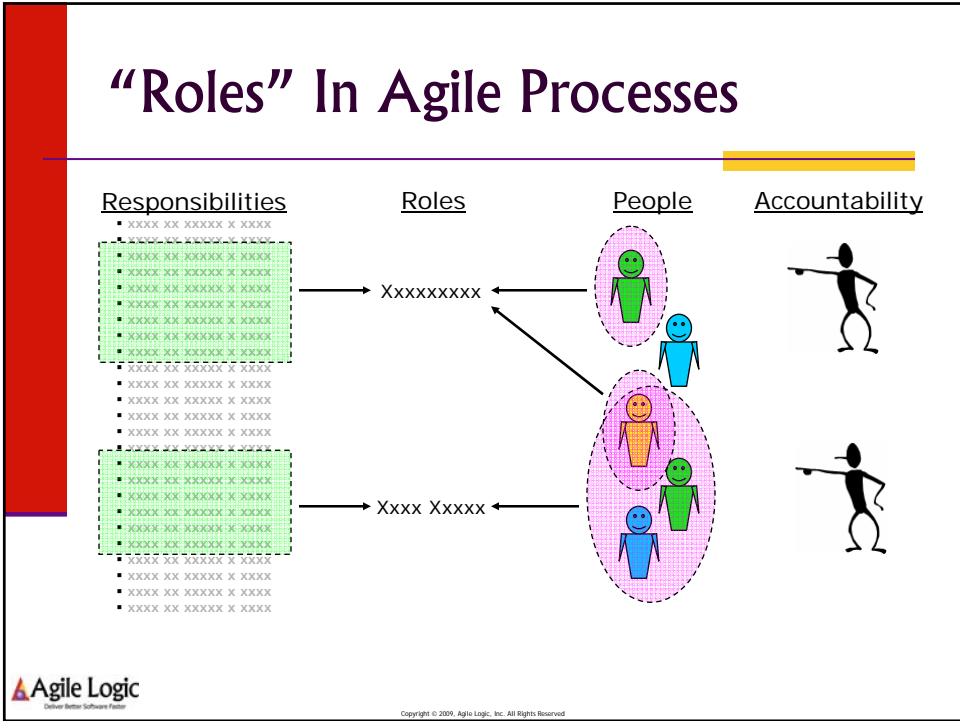Speaker: Paul Hodgetts, Agile Logic, www.AgileLogic.com

Rev 080106

Your Coach: Paul Hodgetts

- Team coach, trainer, consultant, developer
- Founder and CEO of Agile Logic (Fullerton)
- 26 years overall, 10 years agile experience
- Certified Scrum Trainer
- Lots of experience with "enterprise" agile
- Author (Extreme Programming Perspectives)
- Speaker at conferences (Agile 200x, SD East/West, JavaOne)
- Active in Scrum Alliance, Agile Alliance (Program Director)
- Member of CSUF agile advisory board
- Contact info: phodgetts@agilelogic.com

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"Roles" In Agile Processes

Responsibilities	Roles	People	Accountability

Xxxxxxxxx

Xxxx Xxxxx

In Scrum,

"ScrumMaster" is a role…

…with a set of responsibilities…

…handled by a single person…

…who is solely accountable.

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)...

- My ScrumMaster has never been on a Scrum team (but he took a class).
- My ScrumMaster has Ken Schwaber's book on his desk (and says he'll read it soon).
- My ScrumMaster has never heard of Extreme Programming.
- My ScrumMaster proposed that we separate out the test team so they'd be more efficient.
- My ScrumMaster can't really explain story points to us.

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ScrumMaster as an Agile/Scrum Expert...

- Has a clear understanding of the core Scrum rules
- Has a clear understanding of the core Scrum framework and practices
- Has a broad understanding of other agile processes, principles and practices
- Has experience successfully delivering product releases with Scrum
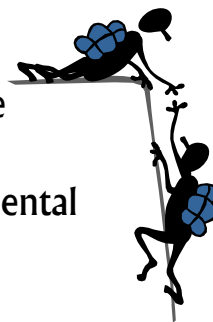- Provide process expertise and ideas

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster can't really explain to me why we're using Scrum.
- My ScrumMaster can't explain our plan for rolling out Scrum to our team(s).
- My ScrumMaster tells me we don't have the resources to get training in Scrum.
- My ScrumMaster always makes us use the proper Scrum terms to describe what we're doing.
- My ScrumMaster showed up on the first day with an "adapted" Scrum process for us to follow.

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ScrumMaster as a Change Agent…

- Has a clear understanding of the organization's goals for transitioning to agile
- Has a clear understanding of the approach and plan for transitioning to agile
- Facilitates and enables the transition
- Reconciles the organization's culture to the Scrum culture
- Has a clear understanding of incremental process improvement

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster develops the high level release plans with our CEO so that we know our due date.
- My ScrumMaster told the VP Marketing to interrupt me during the sprint to work on something for him.
- My ScrumMaster demonstrates our progress to the stakeholders in an off-line meeting.
- My ScrumMaster thinks it's best to keep some of our development challenges to ourselves.

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ScrumMaster as our Process Conscience

- Has a clear understanding of the value of enforcing the core Scrum rules
- Ensures that everything takes place in an open and transparent environment
- Explains, coerces, demands that everyone in the organization act according to the rules
- Tactfully points out where the process deviates from our agreed-to process
- Develops the trust, respect and political capital to carry out these responsibilities

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster isn't here right now, she's working with another team.
- My ScrumMaster isn't here right now, he's in the VP's weekly status meeting.
- My ScrumMaster is my manager.
- My ScrumMaster doesn't really understand what I'm working on.
- My ScrumMaster missed our sprint planning meeting to attend a "Dress for Success" seminar.

ScrumMaster as a Team Member…

- Is always present and available to the Scrum team
- Primary responsibility is the Scrum team
- Is a peer-level member of the Scrum team
- Is involved and understands the team's work
- Is fully, personally committed to the team

Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)...

- My ScrumMaster sits in for our Product Owner in our planning meeting.
- My ScrumMaster brings us our sprint goals from the VP.
- My ScrumMaster is busy writing code.
- My ScrumMaster develops and conducts the demo for sprint review.

ScrumMaster as a Discrete Role...

- Has a sole focus on the ScrumMaster role
- Maintains objectivity and impartiality
- Ensures clear separation of responsibility
- Act as a member of the Scrum team, not on behalf of the Scrum team
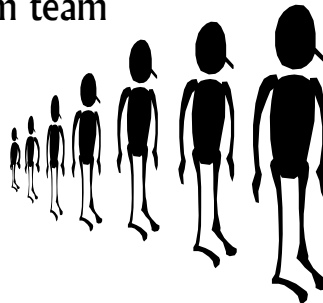
Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster never goes to lunch with us.
- My ScrumMaster always points out our limits and what we can't do.
- My ScrumMaster gets impatient when we are making decisions and makes the call for us.
- My ScrumMaster told us we should use JUnit, and even installed it for us.
- My ScrumMaster gives us a hard time when we try to adjust our work during the sprint.

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ScrumMaster as a Coach & Team Builder

- Has a personal connection to the Scrum team
- Emphasizes "the art of the possible"
- Guides and coaches team activities
- Helps develop the teams self-organization
- Emphasizes Scrum rules and principles
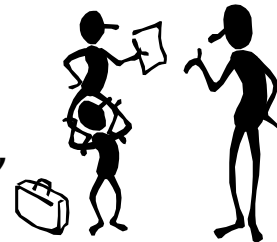- Allows the team to develop solutions
- Supports and defends the team

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster is always scrambling to get the conference call set up for the daily scrum.
- My ScrumMaster runs our daily status meeting.
- My ScrumMaster assigns tasks to me.
- My ScrumMaster updates our sprint tracking info.
- My ScrumMaster needs to approve any of our decisions that affect our sprint plan.
- My ScrumMaster relays our status and needs to the other Scrum teams on our project.

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ScrumMaster as a Facilitator…

- Ensures the team has the necessary environment, facilities, tools, etc.
- Facilitates collaborative sessions
- Coaches the team to execute collaborative session
- Holds the team accountable for team responsibilities
- Enables the team to self-organize, both within and across multiple Scrum teams

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)…

- My ScrumMaster says it's OK when no stakeholders show up for our sprint review.
- My ScrumMaster said it's OK to leave the testing of this story to next sprint.
- My ScrumMaster says it's OK to avoid a few trouble spots and not talk about them during the sprint review demo.
- My ScrumMaster doesn't think we need a published definition of done.

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ScrumMaster as a Remover of Impediments

- Understands the way that Scrum rules generate an environment for delivering product
- Recognizes violations of the rules as a need for improvement
- Takes active steps to remove impediments
- Enlists organizational support for impediments outside the Scrum team's control
- Never lets the team get stalled

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Anti-Patterns (Symptoms)...

- My ScrumMaster seems to argue a lot with our VP and senior managers.
- My ScrumMaster is afraid to tell our CEO that we can't hit our due date.
- My ScrumMaster said it's OK for us to ignore our corporate coding standards because we're a Scrum team.
- My ScrumMaster says it's OK for us to use our own version of Scrum, different from the other teams.

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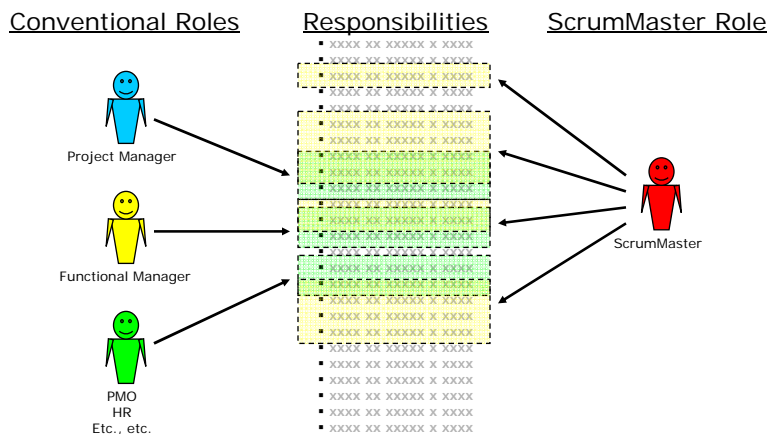## ScrumMaster as a Link to the Organization...

- Works well both at the organizational and the Scrum team level
- Promotes and facilitates transparency and the flow of honest feedback
- Understands the larger organizational picture
- Works to facilitate organizational governance
- Understands the balance between local adaptation and organizational consistency

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Key ScrumMaster Responsibilities...

- Provides agile/Scrum expertise & coaching
- Is the change agent to lead the transition
- Acts as the process conscience for the team
- Is a committed member of the Scrum team
- Understands the role and division of responsibilities
- Actively coaches and works at team building
- Facilitates the Scrum team's flow of work
- Actively and quickly removes impediments
- Acts as an agent to the larger organization

How Does This Factoring Compare?

Conventional Roles   Responsibilities   ScrumMaster Role

Project Manager

Functional Manager

PMO
HR
Etc., etc.

ScrumMaster

Other Approaches…

- **Conventional roles** ("Managers" & "Leads")
  - Can allow more focus (may sub-optimize)
  - Tends to create conflicting interests
- **Extreme Programming**
  - Much more collective responsibility of team
  - Offers a "Coach" role for process (temporary)
  - Recognizes manager and external roles
- **Lean Software Engineering**
  - "Chief Engineer" from TPDS (Toyota)
  - ScrumMaster + Product Owner + Architect

Questions?
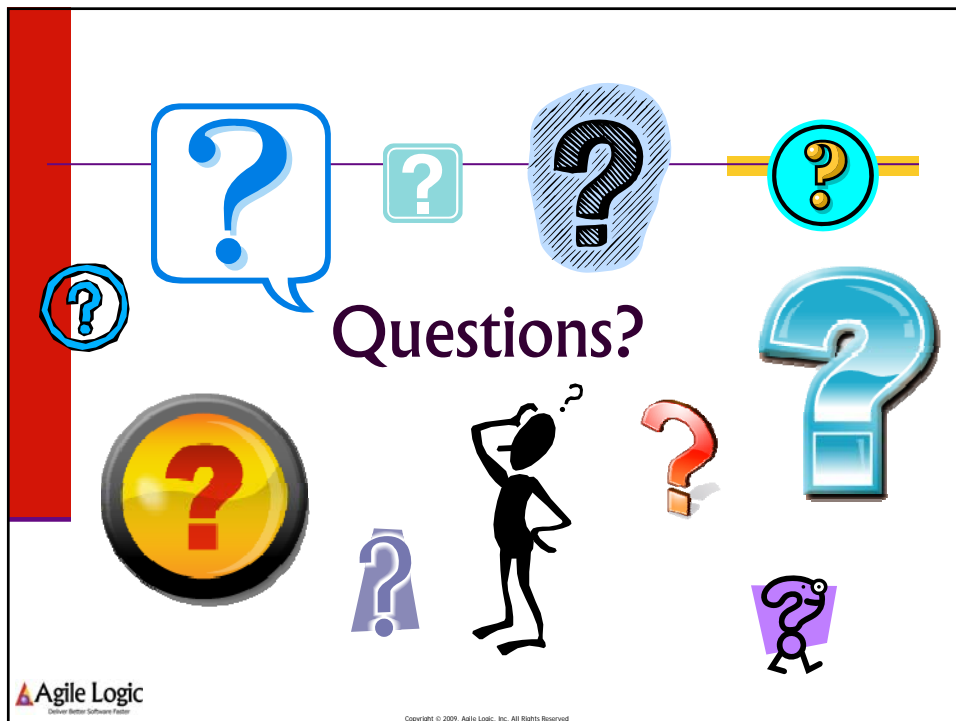
Thank You For Attending!

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